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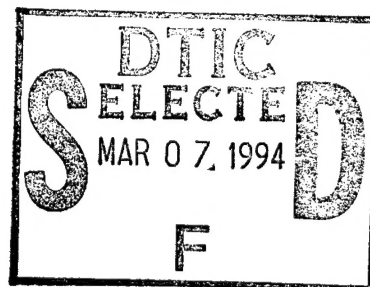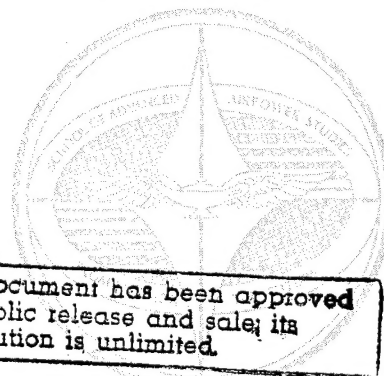
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Coercive Air Strategy
Forcing a Bureaucratic Shift

JOHN I. PRAY, JR., Major, USAF

School of Advanced Airpower Studies

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Major, USAF

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Table

Abstract

The purpose of this work is to provide the air planner with an air strategy that may, under certain defined conditions, be more likely to yield success than current air power theories. Our current stock of strategic ideas tend to rely on a unitary, rational actor assumption to describe the decision-making environments of our potential adversaries. We believe reliance on this simplistic assumption may skew the counterstrategy development process. We propose an alternate decision framework that identifies the importance of consensus decision making and the central role organizations often play in this complex process. This characteristically divisive environment presents many new opportunities to apply military force selectively in a compellent situation. To take advantage of the vulnerabilities created by these internal divisions, we propose a strategy that uses air power to surprise policy advocates in an opponent's domestic coalition and force a bureaucratic shift. By targeting key organizations during windows of coercive opportunity, air power may be able to shape a new consensus and produce a policy change that furthers our interests. Central to our effort is the use of the Czechoslovakian crisis that gripped Europe in the summer and fall of 1938 for it highlights many of the same situational characteristics we see today and can expect to see in the future. Britain's failure to know their opponent resulted in a missed opportunity to take advantage of a split in the German internal consensus that left them vulnerable to a coercive effort.

Acknowledgments

Chapter 1

Introduction

Therefore I say: "know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril. When you are ignorant of the enemy but know yourself, your chances of winning or losing are equal. If ignorant both of your enemy and of yourself, you are certain in every battle to be in peril."

—Sun Tzu
The Art of War

Although the world has changed considerably since Sun Tzu wrote this passage well over two thousand years ago, much remains the same. Today's loose conglomeration of interdependent societies only appears highly advanced by comparison. Even a cursory review of history suggests that many of the same political, economic, religious, ethnic, cultural, and ideological differences that drove people to fight in Sun Tzu's age still prevail. Friction and conflict, it seems, are inevitable facts of life. Consequently, the seemingly innocuous term "peacetime competition" is simply a euphemism that describes the low end of a very real conflict spectrum.

As individuals tasked with employing the military instrument across this spectrum, we must constantly remind ourselves that the dynamic, unavoidable nature of conflict not only defines the playing field, but dictates how rivals play the international political game. Within this highly competitive environment, international actors pursue objectives and implement policies defined primarily by what they loosely describe as "in their best interests." As each nation maneuvers to obtain these often fleeting positional advantages, leverage, or what is commonly called coercion, arguably plays the key role in deciding many outcomes. Coercion, when used properly, acts as a lever giving one actor an edge in his efforts to persuade, pressure, or force another actor to adopt policies that further the coercer's interests. Simply put, coercion is a tool used to influence an opponent's decision-making calculus either to prevent a policy action from occurring—deterrence, or force a policy change after execution—compellence.[1]

This paper examines the role coercion plays in compellence. By narrowing our focus, we can concentrate on a specific set of circumstances where our opponent has the initiative and openly commits himself to a particular course of action. It implies our opponent has completed an internal decision-making process, determined that the potential benefits of a particular policy outweigh the expected costs, and purposefully embarked on a course that he thinks he can win. This action decision effectively draws a new line in the sand and

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places our opponent in the role of the defender—confident in his ability to maintain his ground. Given our cultural proclivity to relinquish the initiative to our adversary, how should we respond?

Turning again to Sun Tzu, we note that "what is of extreme importance in war is to attack the enemys strategy."[2] While developing a strategy to counter or defeat an opponents strategy seems fairly straightforward, our search for a solution lies deeper within the concept of strategy itself. *Strategy,* for our purposes, is "a complex decision process" that connects *ways* and *means* to the *ends* sought.[3] In other words, a strategy *links* the *what* and *how* to the *why* of a policy action.

Unfortunately, most strategists, by focusing on the more concrete ways and means aspects of the strategy "equation," often overlook the importance of the *linking process.* These capabilities-based approaches characteristically assume a decision framework based on Graham Allison's much simplified, unitary rational actor model.[4] We believe reliance on this particular model may, in some cases, skew the counterstrategy development process. Consequently, this paper suggests an alternate decision framework based on an integration of Allison's more comprehensive organizational and political consensus models.[5] In addition, it introduces a coercive air strategy to exploit the vulnerabilities inherent in this decision environment. The central idea is that the military instrument can force a bureaucratic shift that will upset an opponents current domestic coalition. By targeting key organizations, air power may be able to shape a new internal consensus and thereby generate the desired policy change.

Accordingly, we will use a building block approach to present our case and define the conditions that suggest the application of our proposed counterstrategy. Chapter two uses Allison's three decision models to lay the intellectual foundation by introducing differing views of how governments determine policy. To capture each model's unique strengths, we propose an integrated decision framework that highlights the central role organizations can play in a political consensus environment. Using this framework, the chapter concludes by describing four general types of internal consensus that we can use to help direct our air effort.

Chapter three builds on this foundation and seeks to answer the question—how can we use a coercive air strategy to affect the proposed decision framework. The recommended strategy seeks to capitalize on the psychological effects of air power-induced surprise during "windows of coercive opportunity" to undermine the internal confidence in an opponent's original decision. However, contrary to the unitary, yet ambiguous national leadership favored by other theorists, we believe those specific organizational leaders who control key facets of the consensus process form a more lucrative and meaningful coercive target group. Using a simple lever analogy, air power is focused against what these key organizational leaders value to produce a favorable policy change.

Chapter four acknowledges the difficulty of assessing the "value" of a strategy simply on its theoretical merits and uses the Czechoslovakian crisis

that gripped Europe in 1938 to ground the proposed approach in a realistic scenario. This past episode reflects many of the same situational characteristics we see today, underscores the political need to apply military force selectively in a compellent situation, and highlights the danger of the unitary actor assumption. It suggests that the British leaders failed to *know* their German opponent and missed an opportunity to take advantage of the conflicting organizational pressures that left Germans vulnerable following Hitler's decision to solve the crisis by force.

Chapter five briefly summarizes the preceding discussion and identifies those conditions that suggest the successful application of this organizationally oriented coercive air strategy in the future.

Notes

1. Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1966), 71.

2. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 77.

3. Dennis M. Drew and Donald M. Snow, *Making Strategy* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, 1988), 13.

4. Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston, Mass.: Harper Collins Publishers, 1971), 10–38.

6. Ibid., 67–100 and 144–84.

Chapter 2

Organizational Influences on National Decision Making

Given the importance of the *process* aspect of strategy described in chapter one, how do we structure our effort to force our opponent to change his original decision? More specifically, is there some part of an opponent's decision process that may be particularly vulnerable to a coercive counter-strategy action? One seldom considered aspect invites further study and involves the pivotal role organizations can play in a decision's outcome.

Our investigation necessarily begins by developing a broad sense of how governments determine policy. Although much has been written on this subject, Graham Allison's analysis of the Cuban missile crisis provides several insights to help guide our investigation. Each of his three conceptual models frame government decisions from a fundamentally different perspective.[1]

In his first model, the government acts as a unitary actor making rational, value maximizing decisions between competing alternatives. This view, adopted by many political scientists and strategists, predicts a nation will act as a single entity and "rationally" choose the option with the most favorable outcome or highest expected value. The following formula commonly serves as the analytical basis for this approach by expressing expected value (E[V]) as a function of expected benefits (E[B]) and expected costs (E[C]).

$$E[V] = E[B] - E[C]$$

$$\text{where: } E[B] = P_B \times B \text{ and } E[C] = P_C \times C$$

Although not necessarily designed to produce a numerical answer, the equation, when we examine its parts, highlights two critical points. First, the expected benefit and the expected cost elements require a *value judgment* concerning the actual benefit (B) and cost (C) of a particular alternative. Second, both elements also require a *probability estimate* that particular benefit (P_B) or cost (P_C) will be obtained or incurred. These four subjective components combine to confound what initially seemed a simple exercise. Furthermore, they uncover a potential source of internal conflict as individuals, organizations, and interest groups tend to bias these judgments and estimates to support their views. As Dr James March, a distinguished behavioral theorist and author notes, "Competition for policy support pushes advocates to imagine favorable outcomes and to inflate estimates of the desirability of those outcomes."[2] Consequently, Allison argues the unitary, rational actor model, when used alone, fails to address the often subjective

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and possibly irrational organizational and political pressures that usually lie at the heart of most complex decisions.[3]

To compensate for these additional decision pressures, Allison's second model addresses the organizational factor. Although commonly construed as simple conduits through which policy decisions flow, organizations and the people who lead them come to develop unique, "institutional" views of the world based on their assigned responsibilities. These views naturally shape the organizational need to divide complex issues into manageable activities through the use of standardized operating procedures and established routines.

These set ways of doing business, unintentionally (or possibly intentionally), filter incoming information, bias interpretations, and channel the search for suitable alternatives. The simple fact that "self interested manipulation of information is a palpable feature of institutional life" often predisposes recommended options to favor organizational needs or objectives.[4] While bureaucratic needs such as survival, growth, budget share, internal morale, or autonomy may not seem to be the fundamental determinants of policy, they often dictate the objectives of senior officials.[5] Dr Robert Gallucci, a noted foreign policy authority, believes,

> Of central importance to those actors associated with the large bureaucracies of the military services, the Departments of State and Defense, and the intelligence agencies is the maintenance of the stature, role, and budgets of their organizations or organizational subunits. . . . Their perspective on matters of foreign policy is strongly influenced by their bureaucratic affiliation.[6]

High-level organizational leaders, it seems, tend to see a strong correlation between national and organizational objectives. In other words, they often view something that is good for the organization as being good for the nation, although they may not believe the reverse to be true. Gallucci adds:

> It is, however, neither a tenet of the bureaucratic perspective nor a real world truth, that political actors consciously choose to maximize their perceived organizational interests at the expense of what they perceive to be the national interest. Actors tend to take stands on issues that are consistent with their "seats" in the bureaucracy because they really see the world from the vantage point of their position.[7]

As these competing organizations present "their" alternatives, differences of opinion concerning costs, benefits, and probabilities frequently occur. Allison's third model underscores how political compromise reconciles these bureaucratic differences.[8] Allison and many "first wave" theorists, such as Roger Hilsman, Samuel Huntington, Richard Neustadt, and Warner Schilling, see governments as a loose collection of competing individuals and interest groups who bargain to gain decision consensus. Dr Robert Art, a professor of politics and former Guggenheim fellow, summarizes their collective view on foreign policy-making:

> [It] is a political process of building consensus and support for a policy among those participants who have the power to affect the outcome and who often disagree over what they think the outcome should be.[9]

Yet, it is important to note that "although commitment to a policy or program in its own right may be important for some coalition members, few major policies could be adopted without some supporters for whom the policy is relatively unimportant except as a political bargain."[10] As a result, uncertainty, subjectivity, and lack of commitment characterize the political consensus model and form major impediments to unified action.

While Allison's three models are powerful analytical tools, the real value of his work lies in an attempt to explain *why* governments change their policies. He concludes that the rational actor model and its corresponding reliance on expected value calculations fails to address a particularly disturbing fact—nations never "change" when the expected value equation turns negative. They change some time *after* the equation shows costs exceed benefits.[11] His organizational and political consensus models attempt to solve this riddle. He offers two key propositions that shape the remaining discussion:

• Quite often from the outset of a war, some members of the government are convinced that the war effort is futile.
• Surrender (or change in policy) is likely to come as a result of a political shift that enhances the effective power of this opposition group.[12]

What the preceding discussion means to the strategist is that those theories based on the unitary, rational actor assumption may, at times, be fundamentally flawed. Nations rarely operate as a unitary actor and because of the need to bring competing factions together to form a consensus, they seldom act rationally. While Allison acknowledges these limitations, many strategists do not. Therefore, we need to take Allison's analysis a step further by blending the strengths of the three models into one interrelated structure. Conceptually, we assert that decisions often occur in an environment where the political consensus internally adjusts to organizational pressures and externally adapts to rational actor constraints (fig. 1).[13] Upon closer examination of this environment, two key points emerge.
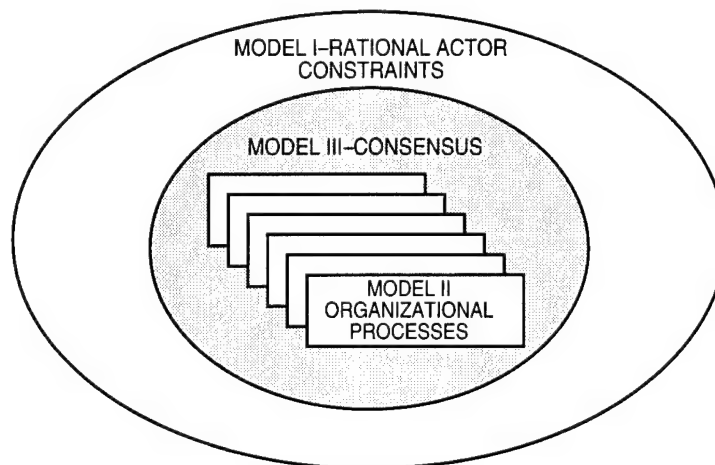

Figure 1. Decision-Making Environment

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First, organizations often play a central role in the decision process. Those few leaders at the top of an organization can greatly influence national policy outcomes. When given the opportunity, "responsible officials feel powerfully moved to recommend their solutions."[14] As shown earlier, their recommendations are often inexorably tied to the needs of the organization. For, as Gallucci notes, "There is no evidence that as the stakes rise actors remove the tinted glasses through which they view everyday matters and begin to see issues with new objectivity."[15] The bottom line thus becomes "although crisis decision-making may be removed from organizations, the effects of organizations cannot be removed from these decisions."[16]

Second, policy decisions result from a political consensus. Although we cannot expect to understand fully individual motivation within this consensus, we can do more than simply lumping opposing decision makers together as a unitary actor. Allison states, "thinking about a nation as if it were a person neglects considerable differences among individual leaders of a government whose positions and power lead them to quite different perceptions and preferences."[17] Gallucci agrees:

> Senior actors try to shape foreign policy outcomes so that they will be consistent with what they see as the national interest. They will do this by bargaining and compromising, by forming coalitions, and by using whatever leverage is available to them.[18]

With the compellence scenario in mind, we often find a major source of internal conflict results from differing estimations of the expected outcome.

Interorganizational conflict is therefore likely in both the pre- and post-decision phases. As March asserts:

> Adopted policies will, on average, be oversold. Inflated expectations about programs that are successful in gaining support from policymakers make subsequent disappointments likely. Thus great hopes lead to action, but great hopes are invitations to disappointment. This, in turn, leads both to an erosion of support and to an awareness of "failures of implementation."[19]

As a result, what seems like a coherent team, may, in fact, be what one prominent researcher describes as an "illusion."[20] An awareness of these internal differences and doubts forces top decision makers to try to maintain, "leeway until time clarifies uncertainties."[21] Thus, consensus decision makers often try to keep as many options open as possible by avoiding firm commitments that bind them to a particular decision.

It is this division of support that ultimately may prove useful in determining an effective target for a coercive air effort. Although the possibilities may seem limitless, four basic descriptions—strong, mixed, split, or weak—categorize the level of internal consensus concerning policy decisions (fig. 2).

Strong internal support (Type 1) focuses on a shared image outlook. All the primary actors tend to see the decision from a common or shared perspective in terms of the situation, the alternatives, and the expected consequences. Mixed internal support (Type 2) describes a condition where the majority of key players are not fully committed for or against a particular course of
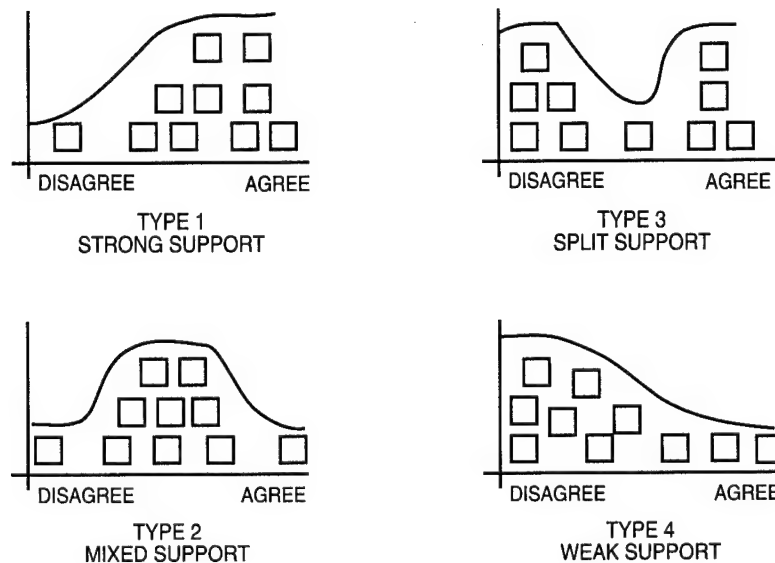
Figure 2. Internal Support Categories

action. This approximates a standard bell curve where most of the players are somewhere in the middle. Split internal support (Type 3) reveals a definite rift between the major decision makers. The primary actors may have a common view of the situation, but decidedly differ either on the chosen alternative or expected outcome. Weak internal support (Type 4) depicts a minority within the decision-making body driving the final choice. This minority sponsors a decision without significant support. Although these four types do not consider the relative power among the major actors, they serve as a basis for our attempts to "know" the enemy's internal situation.

In each of the above cases, we can tailor our response to maximize our impact on the internal consensus. We may seek to *surprise advocates* or *support opponents* of a particular policy to take advantage of these internal differences and the resulting uncertainty. As March notes, "As a policy unfolds into action, the different understandings of an ambiguous political agreement combine with the usual transformation of preferences over time to become bases for abandoning support."[22] This lack of support often leads to a search for alternatives. William Jones, a Rand consultant, states,

> Many of our serious, responsible functionaries, continuing their strong belief that the course of action selected is likely to result in undesirable consequences for the nation, are likely to exploit many of the channels available to them to influence future decisions.[23]

If their search for a suitable alternative ends with one favorable to us, we have achieved our coercive aim.

In summary, "It was Allison who made everyone conscious of the potential benefits of consistently viewing events in foreign and security policy from the vantage point of competing domestic governmental elites."[24] Building on the

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strengths of his three models, we extended the analysis to show the central role organizations often play within the political decision process. We conclude that threatening organizational imperatives may, under the right circumstances, exert enough influence to force an opponent to change or modify his original policy decision.

Notes

1. Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston, Mass.: Harper Collins Publishers, 1971).
2. Vicki E. Baier, James G. March, and Harald Saetren, "Implementation and Ambiguity," in *Decisions and Organizations*, ed. James G. March (New York: Basil Blackwell Inc., 1988), 158.
3. Allison, 246.
4. James G. March, "Introduction: A Chronicle of Speculations About Decision-Making in Organizations," in *Decisions and Organizations*, 6.
5. Stephen D. Krasner, "Are Bureaucracies Important?" *Foreign Policy* 7 (Summer 1972), 165, 169.
6. Robert L. Gallucci, "Neither Peace Nor Honor, the Politics of American Military Policy in Viet-Nam," in *Studies in International Affairs* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 138.
7. Ibid., 142.
8. Krasner, 165.
9. Robert J. Art, "Bureaucratic Politics and American Foreign Policy: A Critique," *Policy Sciences* 4 (1973), 468.
10. Baier, March, and Saetren, 158.
11. Allison, 261–62.
12. Ibid., 263.
13. Robert Pape, a professor at the School of Advanced Airpower Studies, presented his integration of Allison's models during a lecture on 8 November 1993 at Maxwell AFB, Ala.
14. William M. Jones, *On Decisionmaking in Organizations* (Santa Monica, Calif.: The Rand Corporation, March 1964), Rand Memorandum RM-3968-PR, Air University Library, Maxwell AFB, Ala., File No. M-30352-9-NC, No. 3968-PR, 18.
15. Gallucci, 142.
16. Ibid., 141.
17. Allison, 254.
18. Gallucci, 138.
19. Baier, March, and Saetren, 158.
20. Ibid., 159.
21. Allison, 177.
22. Baier, March, and Saetren, 159.
23. Jones, 19.
24. Gallucci, 137.

Chapter 3

Air Strategies

Armed with a conceptual decision framework that identifies the importance of organizations in consensus policy-making, this chapter addresses the question, How can we use a coercive air strategy to affect this framework. By using a comparative construct that mirrors the systems analysis paradigm (fig. 3),[1] we will start by examining how several prominent air theorists and strategists attempted to tackle this problem. A brief description of each component should help the reader understand the practical methodology that underpins our approach.
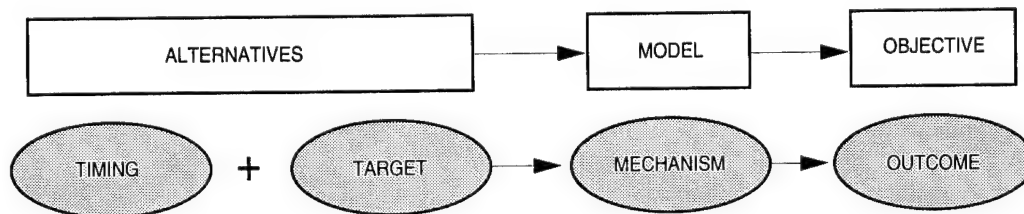

Figure 3. Air Strategy Comparison Construct

Beginning at the end, the outcome is quite simply the political result the strategist seeks to achieve. This desired endstate (or what a systems analyst calls the objective) can range anywhere from formal acceptance of an unconditional surrender demand to an informal apology. Although the use of military force usually indicates that vital interests are at stake, the desired effect, in a compellent situation, equates to an enemy *policy change that suits our best interests*.

Following a clear statement of the objective, the strategist continues to work backward to develop an overarching concept of how he expects air power will achieve the desired outcome. This concept, in essence, is the *mechanism* that ultimately permits the strategy to work. Returning to our systems analysis paradigm, we see the mechanism and the model perform very similar functions. Generally speaking, they both represent a simplified view of what *should* happen in the real world. According to Edith Stokey and Richard Zeckhauser, authors of *A Primer for Policy Analysis*, all models have one common feature. "They aim at reducing the complexity of the problem at hand by eliminating nonessential features so that we may concentrate on the features that describe the primary behavior of the significant variables."[2]

A model's value, then, lies in its ability to balance our desire for simplicity with the often competing need to forecast actual outcomes accurately. Extending this line of reasoning to the mechanism, we see that it is nothing more than a strategist's model of governmental action. It contains a tightly defined assumption of how a particular government *should* make a policy change decision.

This last statement sparks a key question, Does one's assumption concerning the nature of governmental decisions limit or expand the mechanism's applicability? Simply put, Is there one mechanism that, if discovered, works in *all* situations? How we answer this question is critical to the strategy development process. If the answer is *yes*, then we should tailor all situations to our mechanism and strategy. If the answer is *no*, then we should tailor our mechanism and strategy to the situation. Intuitively, we should be highly suspicious of any statement that includes the word "all." Stokey and Zeckhauser believe the choice of a particular model depends heavily on the particular situation we face.[3] Reviving the mechanism-model analogy described earlier, it stands to reason that our choice of strategy mechanism depends on the character of our opponent's decision process. In other words, while it is highly unlikely that a single model is appropriate for every situation, it may be equally unlikely that a single air strategy mechanism is universally applicable.

Unfortunately, while most analysts understand a model's central importance, many strategists fail to appreciate fully the importance of clearly defining their assumed mechanism. As a result, strategists often fall into one of two traps. They either dogmatically assert their strategy applies in all situations or fail to define the mechanism adequately. Regarding the latter, many simply assume a causal link exists between the destruction of certain targets and the desired outcome. For example, many allege that bombing produced the peace treaty that ended the Vietnam War in January 1973 simply because peace negotiations began as a result of the Linebacker II campaign in December 1972. To avoid these pitfalls, air strategists must make a concerted attempt to define their operating mechanism for the entire strategy rests on this foundation.

Once the strategist defines the mechanism, he can turn to the *targets* and *timing* components. These two variables, when combined, form alternatives, or an "air campaign."[4] These alternatives provide the strategist with different ways of accomplishing a particular outcome (objective) given an understanding of the assumed mechanism (model). This suggests that the air campaign is not a separate or subordinate military activity, but an integral part of the larger strategy.

Various strategists define the "air campaign" portions of their strategies quite differently. Concerning targets, four basic types eventually emerge.[5]

- Leadership
- Economy
- Population
- Military forces

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Clearly, the relative value of each of these target types can vary considerably from one adversary to another; however, the strategist cannot afford to underestimate the importance of the leadership set. If we expect a coercive air strategy to compel an adversary to change a particular policy, it can only happen as a result of one of two fundamentally similar events. Either the current government concedes or a new government comes to power and concedes.

Although Col John Warden, as the architect of the Gulf War air campaign, and the Air Corps Tactical School (ACTS) lecturers, as the architects of the World War II strategic bombing campaign, differ greatly in their approach, they both emphasize the importance of the leadership angle. Warden concludes that the "most critical ring is the enemy command structure because it is the only element of the enemy—whether a civilian at the seat of government or a general directing a fleet—that can make *concessions*" (emphasis added).[6] Nearly 60 years earlier, lecturers at the ACTS warned:

> When it is considered that an air attack upon a nation in the future may well be expected to produce, within a relatively short space of time, a sufficient impression upon national morale to bring about a condition where the general bulk of the population would be opposed to the continuation of hostilities, the attack upon government centers must be given careful consideration, as *the political establishment must remain intact if the attitude of the people at large is to be rapidly sensed and given appropriate expression.* (Emphasis added)[7]

The preceding quotation uncovers another issue the strategist must address about targeting, should we take a direct or an indirect route to induce concessions from our opponent. In other words, although a strategy may rely on punishment or denial, the economy, the population, and the military target sets are predominately *indirect* attempts to evoke concessions. The national leadership, on the other hand, presents a very different situation. Due to its unique status as a legitimate target set itself, we may be lulled into thinking we can only attack these high-level leaders directly. However, as we shall see, we may be able to target what key *organizational* leaders' value and thereby indirectly force a concession.

The other air campaign variable concerns timing. Although outside the normal systems analysis paradigm, it deals specifically with a strategy's rate of application of force to enhance its overall effect. The strategist can vary this rate anywhere from an almost instantaneous response to a more deliberate or gradual effort. By incorporating the notion of the air campaign into the construct, we now have the foundation necessary to conduct an analysis of several influential air theorists (fig. 4).

Giulio Douhet, an Italian air power pioneer, believed the morale of the civilian population was the weakest link in any national defense effort. If bombed using a combination of high explosives, incendiaries, and gas, he believed the populace would stop supporting the war effort. He writes:

> A complete breakdown of the social structure cannot but take place in a country subjected to this kind of merciless pounding from the air. The time would soon come when, to put an end to horror and suffering, the people themselves, driven by the instinct of self-preservation, would rise up and demand an end to the war.[8]
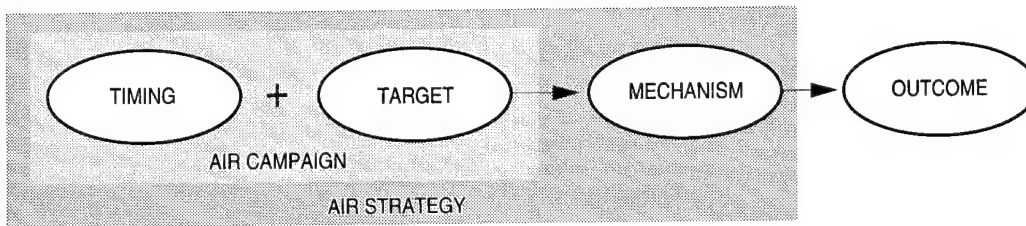
Figure 4. Expanded Air Strategy Comparison Construct

Seeing popular revolt as the mechanism that compels governmental concessions and the civil population as the preferred target, he completed his strategy by stating the need to "inflict upon the enemy the greatest amount of damage in the shortest possible time."[9]

Although essentially agreeing with Douhet's conclusion that civilian morale would motivate governmental decision makers, the ACTS took a slightly different track. Since they considered a direct attack on civilians morally reprehensible, they sought a more subtle approach to accomplish the same ends. Using the United States as a model, they concluded that modern societies relied heavily on an economy composed of interdependent linkages, "the industrial web." They maintained that

> modern industrial nations are susceptible to defeat by interruption of this web, which is built to permit the dependence of one section upon many or all other sections, and further that this interruption is the primary objective for an air force. It is possible that the moral collapse brought about by the breaking of this closely knit web will be sufficient, but closely connected therewith is the industrial fabric which is absolutely essential for modern warfare.[10]

In essence, they searched for key industrial targets whose destruction would degrade both the will and capability to resist. While they expected a rapid attack on an opponent's economy would undermine civilian support, they reasoned *any* economic damage would invariably hinder their overall war effort.

Thomas Schelling, Harvard professor and author of *Arms and Influence*, breaks from the two approaches described above and introduces the idea of risk manipulation. His punitive approach, while similar in many regards to both the Douhet and ACTS strategies, seeks to impose a gradual increase in costs (civil damage) while threatening to inflict even greater costs.[11] Schelling expects rational enemy leaders to appreciate the high probability of future pain and concede.

Col John Warden offers a far different approach by focusing on direct attacks on the enemy leadership. Operating under the old adage, "if you cut off the head the body will die," he believes, "the essence of war is to apply pressure against the enemy's innermost strategic ring—its command structure."[12] He reasons that if one can kill, capture, or isolate the heads of state, either a change in the government or strategic paralysis will occur.[13] He expects "hyperwar," a massive, near-simultaneous attack against strategic targets, to produce the desired results.

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Using the construct identified earlier, table 1 summarizes their views.

Table 1

Comparative Analysis Summary

THEORIST	TIMING	TARGET	MECHANISM	OUTCOME
Douhet	Immediate	Population	Lower morale Revolt	Policy change
ACTS	Rapid	Economy "Industrial web"	Social disintegration	Policy change
Schelling	Gradual	Population	Future costs	Policy change
Warden	Instantaneous	Leadership	Decapitation Strategic paralysis	Policy change

The previous discussion sets the stage to readdress the question posed at the beginning of this chapter, How can we use a coercive air strategy to affect our integrated decision environment? Broadly speaking, our recommended solution seeks a policy change by undermining organizational confidence and support for a particular consensus decision. From the standpoint of an air campaign concerned primarily with targets and timing, this strategy targets what key organizational leaders value during windows of coercive opportunity. Table 2 diagrams the key elements of our strategy.

Table 2

Proposed Strategy

TIMING	TARGET	MECHANISM	OUTCOME
Rapid, during windows of opportunity	Key organizational leaders in Model III consensus	Undermine policy consensus	Policy change

Each of the three major strategy components—timing, target, and mechanism—requires further elaboration. We will examine the timing component first by addressing two different aspects—*when* and *how*. If we accept the idea that there is no universally correct air strategy, the first question is, *When* should we use the proposed strategy? As mentioned in the previous chapter, internal support for a particular policy may, at any given time, vary drastically. In fact, during the inevitable ebb and flow of resolve and doubt during any crisis, an opposing government may lack the support of the competing internal organizations necessary to pursue the original policy decision to a successful conclusion. Reviving the second of Allison's propositions, these internal shifts can indicate the approach of a potentially useful window of coercive opportunity.

Unfortunately, an estimate of the internal consensus does not provide, by itself, enough depth to serve as the basis for our window of opportunity calculation. We need to balance a lack of consensus against another critical factor—resolve. Although difficult to measure precisely, resolve is an assessment of an opponent's willingness to see a decision through to the end. This willingness has an emotional impact far beyond a simple commitment to

"stay the course" in spite of new information that challenges the wisdom of the original decision. It also implies an acceptance of the fact that in an uncertain world the present situation or crisis may get worse before it gets better. As Schelling notes, "the essence of the crisis is its unpredictability."[14] Therefore, it is this interaction between internal dissension and resolve that defines our window of coercive opportunity (fig. 5). While only an example for illustrative purposes, the figure shows that a combination of low resolve and high internal dissension suggests a favorable opportunity may exist to coerce our opponent.
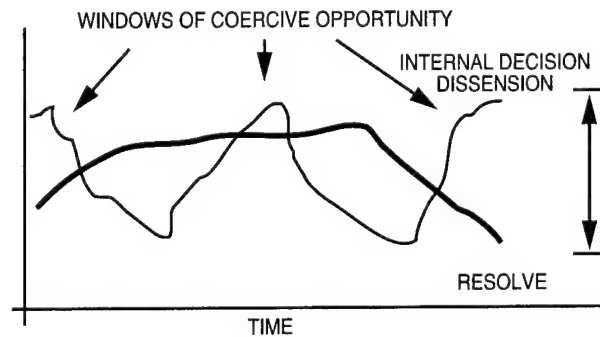

Figure 5. Internal Dissension-Resolve Pattern

At this point, some may expect the introduction of a set of mathematically precise formulas to complete the y-axis of the graph. Others might like to see a corresponding numerical threshold that triggers the selection of a coercive approach when a predetermined dissension-resolve difference is reached. Unfortunately, those calculations are beyond the scope of this paper. However, we can reasonably assert that a more complete knowledge of the inner workings of our enemy may provide ballpark estimates that allow us to predict the approach of these key points and tailor our strategy accordingly. Ideally, our coercive strategy would serve to drive the internal dissension line upward and the resolve line downward thus increasing the chances for successful coercion (fig. 6).
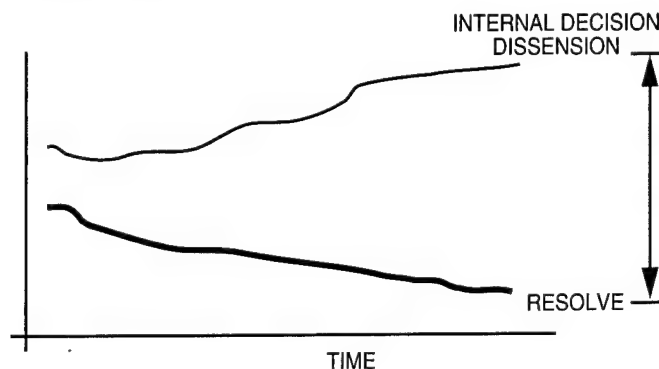

Figure 6. Desired Internal Dissension-Resolve Pattern

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The second aspect of timing involves the *how* question. More specifically, how *fast* should we apply our air strategy? Our response must be rapid for three reasons. First, the conditions favoring the coercive opportunity may be brief, thereby strengthening the "window" analogy. As an example, consider the German situation in early 1943. After their catastrophic defeat at Stalingrad, the existing conditions might have been favorable to build consensus against Hitler. Unfortunately, the Casablanca Conference declaration calling for unconditional surrender quickly stiffened German resolve and served to solidify the consensus. This action effectively closed the coercive window.

Second, incremental pressures often do not warrant a serious review of the cost-benefit calculus until a point is reached where the cumulative costs have become too high. In other words, a series of small steps often gives the enemy enough time to adapt to, or counter, our efforts. In addition, since a gradual response may appear nonthreatening, the level of commitment may actually rise. As Jeffrey Pfeffer, author of *Power in Organizations*, warns:

> When confronted with the fact that the behavior has failed, was unnecessary, or in some other way has produced unpleasant results, a process of justification apparently ensues. This process frequently results in even more commitment to the chosen course of action, which leads to more resources, effort, and more favorable attitudes being expressed toward something that has not worked out.[15]

While we all can cite examples where a group backed a decision to the bitter end, Pfeffer cites other sources that stress the central role free choice plays in the commitment process. He quotes a prominent researcher,

> Volition is essential to all commitment. It is the cement that binds the action to the person and that motivates him to accept the implications of his acts. . . . Without volition, a behavior is not necessarily committing, for the person can always assert that he really did not cause the behavior himself.[16]

It seems that commitment and resolve are powerful unifying forces when given freely. In our consensus environment where a bargain is the medium of exchange, commitment, as mentioned earlier, may be an "illusion."[17]

Finally, if engaged in a particular air or surface strategy, we must be ready to adopt a coercive strategy when a promising situation develops unexpectedly. In spite of a concerted effort to "know our enemy," unlikely events do happen. One particularly critical development would involve a change in the decision-making pattern that our strategy mechanism is designed to counter. If we blindly adhere to our original strategy, we could be directing our efforts inefficiently; worse yet, we could be directing our efforts ineffectively. This need for a rapid and flexible response tends to favor some use of air power.

Turning from timing to targets, we see that organizational elements within the consensus environment contain the key to a successful application of coercive air power. Our goal is to establish the proper conditions for a new consensus to change the policy. The key target, as mentioned earlier, is not the unitary, yet ambiguous national leadership, but more specifically the leaders of those organizations who provide swing votes or dominate voting in the political process. Depending on the type of internal consensus, we may be

able to influence the decisive individuals indirectly by threatening or attacking items they see as vital to their survival or relative influence.

Finally, we need to define the mechanism that will cause the opponent's key organizational leaders to press for a policy change. Lt Col Pat Pentland, a practitioner of chaos theory as it applies to strategy, offers four requirements for change to occur:

- an anomaly (difference) must be present and perceived,
- an alternative choice must be present,
- the proposed change must fit their internal demands (cultural) for coherence, and
- the proposed change must meet the external requirements of the environment.[18]

While all four factors are important, the first two—the anomaly and the alternative—deserve special attention.

Since an intelligent opponent has considered our probable responses, the coercer can take one of two approaches to split the consensus. We can *surprise* advocates of a particular policy within the consensus with an unanticipated response hoping to stimulate the uncertainty that remains suppressed beneath the surface. The psychological effects of surprise, many assert, can result in "success out of proportion to the effort expended."[19] ACTS lecturers went even further when they stated, "Air forces possess, to a greater degree than any other military force, a flexibility which empowers them with the greatest capabilities for surprise."[20] What we hope to achieve is a decrease in the relative power of those supporting the policy by showing their inability to predict future consequences accurately. The resulting shift in the power base within the consensus, according to Allison's expectations, might be sufficient to compel the decision-making group to take an alternate course of action. This mechanism reveals two additional demands needed to fulfill Pentlands requirements for change.

First, the magnitude of the surprise must exceed a certain perception threshold. This threshold is simply some situation-dependent level that allows our opponent to distinguish our response from the surrounding noise. That is, the "surprise" must be significant enough for our opponent to notice it. If noticed, surprise provides a shock to an adversary's decision system that challenges the probability estimates embedded in the expected value formula discussed at the beginning of chapter two. Essentially, surprise can affect both variables by increasing the probability of costs (P_C) being incurred and decreasing the probability of success (P_S). Consider the Japanese situation in August 1945. The twin surprises of the atomic bomb and Russia's entry into the war undermined the military's confidence in their ability to defend the home islands (P_S) and increased the emperor's belief of increased civil cost (P_C).

Second, a surprising turn of events provides top decision makers with new options or alternatives to consider. While we have seen that leaders could dogmatically stick to the original plan, a more likely political consensus response would be to address the validity of the old decision in light of the

new information. Harrison and March note that "empirical studies of decision-making in political institutions and organizations indicate that surprises are often negative, that realizations from decisions tend to be disappointing."[21] We hope to encourage this feeling of dissatisfaction with the present conditions for it is "the major variable affecting the initiation of search" for alternatives.[22] March agrees, stating that "in periods and domains of success, search is reduced. In periods and domains of failure, search is increased."[23]

From a practical aspect, we need to induce a feeling of failure, a feeling of an inability to predict or control the future accurately. If we respond as expected, we only strengthen the feeling of success and strengthen the position of those within the consensus that support the policy. In such cases, alternatives, particularly those favorable to us, stand a poor chance of being considered.

The other coercive approach designed to split the consensus seeks to support the predicted outcome advocated by the opposition. This approach is, in many ways, simply the reverse of the surprise-oriented approach. By responding in a way that seemingly proves those who doubted the policy predicted its consequences, we hope to strengthen their position within the consensus. From their improved internal standing, we hope to see alternatives adopted that support our best interests.

Both of these approaches are subtle variations in the strategy's application. Either can be viewed in an expansion of the simple lever analogy identified in the introduction. Our strategy, in its most basic form, involves nothing more than the application of leverage to overcome an opposing force (fig. 7). In international politics, the opposing force is another actor's policy. Two components make up the framework: the fulcrum and the lever.
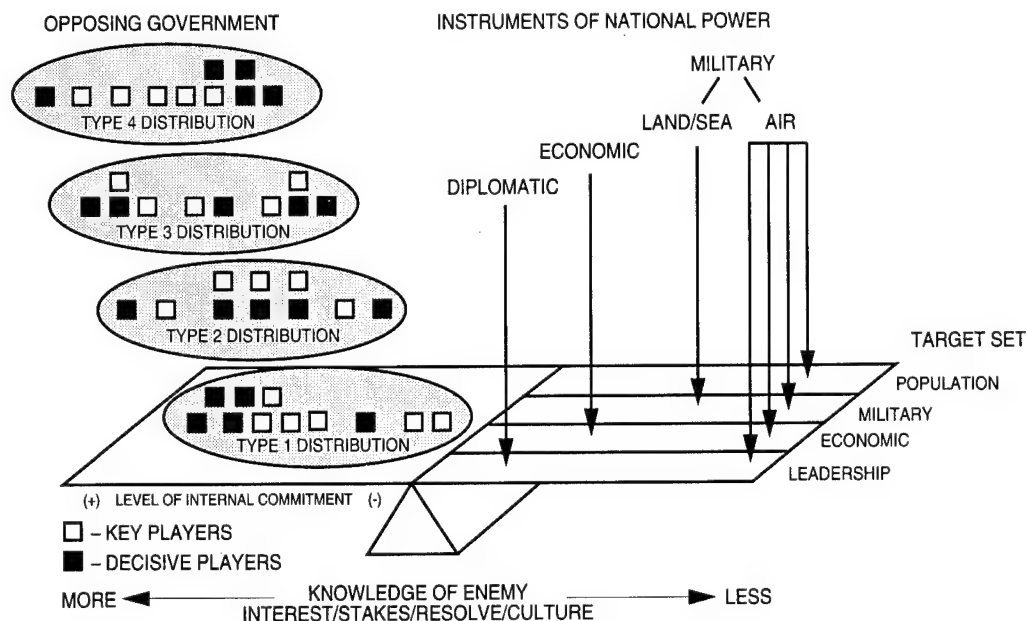

Figure 7. Coercive Strategy (Theory)

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The central feature is the fulcrum. It is a hinge point that imparts a multiplicative effect on the entire coercive process. This sliding scale, represents, in a broad sense, our knowledge of the enemy. It is a composite appraisal of many factors that include, but are not limited to, key leaders' attitudes, interests, stakes, and cultural biases in a particular course of action. While an in-depth knowledge of an opponent cannot guarantee success, it can make us sensitive to the state of the enemy's internal cohesion. Consider, for example, a journalist preparing a story concerning how US representatives might vote on a particularly contentious piece of legislation. A foreign journalist, not well versed in US internal politics, could only offer the most obvious conclusions. An experienced American political journalist, on the other hand, could write a much richer article. He could identify the key players, their relative influence, values, stakes, commitment, and resolve. He could offer comment on subtle linkages where conflicts or differences could be a factor. These are precisely the same questions we need to answer to make coercion work.

The second major component is the lever. The coercer, on the right, can use the three classic instruments of national power to apply pressure on the various aspects of the opposing structure. The lever is further divided into four elements each representing one of the four primary target sets—leadership, economic, military, and population. While the other instruments of national power have a somewhat limited use, air power's inherent capabilities of speed, range, flexibility, and lethality enable it to influence targets rapidly across the entire spectrum.

The left side of the lever represents an opposing government's key players. Each major player calculates the effects of our pressures on the same four general categories of targets. We need to ask several important questions in an attempt to determine the internal consensus typology, gauge the level of resolve, and gather data on target vulnerabilities and importance. Who are the key players and who are the decisive players? Are any of these individuals particularly vulnerable? Will any of these individuals respond to organizational pressures? What does each of them expect to gain or lose from the policy decision? What does each organizational leader value? Is what they value vulnerable to attack? Answers to such questions should provide the strategist with the knowledge of the enemy necessary to select the most effective strategy mechanism and then design an appropriate air campaign.

Successfully applying this coercive strategy, under the right conditions, should tilt the entire structure (the bureaucratic shift) and result in a policy change in our favor (fig. 8). In this example, we have determined a split consensus exists, assessed the presence of a favorable coercive window of opportunity, and selectively applied air power against military and economic targets that several decisive organizational players value to shape a new internal consensus.

Considering this alternative air strategy, the next chapter will study a historical case to help determine the unique circumstances that might lead one to consider the use of this approach.
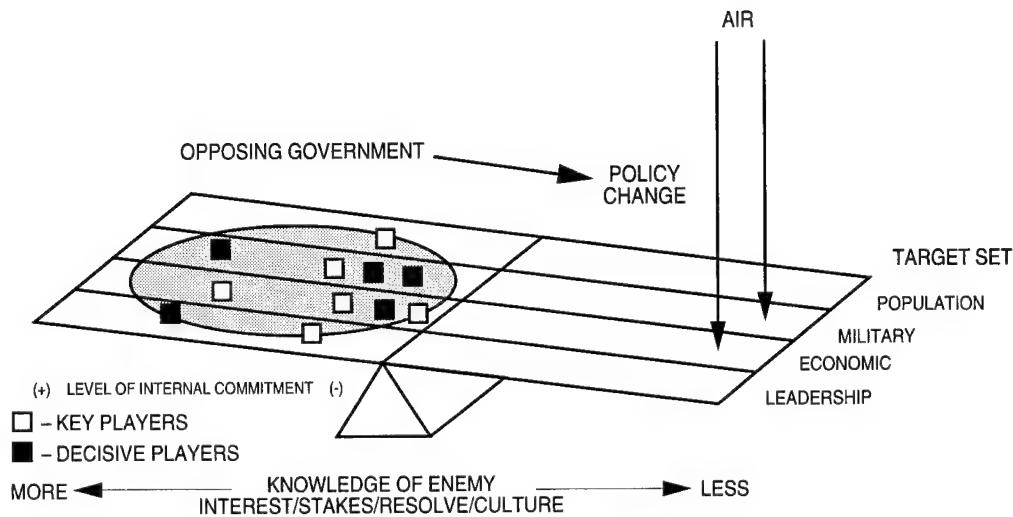
Figure 8. Coercive Strategy (Applied)

Notes

1. Dr Robert Pape and Col Ken Feldman, professors at the School of Advanced Airpower Studies, developed this construct. Colonel Feldman helped Dr Pape integrate the systems analysis concepts.

2. Edith Stokey and Richard Zeckhauser, *A Primer for Policy Analysis* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1978), 13.

3. Ibid., 17.

4. Col Ken Feldman, a School of Advanced Airpower Studies professor, developed the idea that the timing and targets aspects of the strategy model equate to an air campaign.

5. Colonel Warden believes "every state and military organization will have a unique set of centers of gravity—or vulnerabilities." Some vulnerabilities are more important than others and take the form of five concentric circles. The most important vulnerability is the *enemy command element* located at the center. Moving outward *essential production* is the next ring followed by the *transportation network*, then the *population*, and finally the *fielded military forces*. The ACTS lecturers envisioned three highly interdependent spheres comprising an enemy's national structure—the *social* sphere, the *economic* sphere, and the *political* sphere. Attacks against either the spheres of the national structure or the armed forces formed the two general categories of Air Force objectives. Blending these works and several others, four basic types of target sets emerge—leadership, military forces, economy, and the civil population.

6. John A. Warden III, "Employing Air Power in the Twenty-first Century," in *The Future of Air Power in the Aftermath of the Gulf War,* ed. Richard H. Shultz, Jr., and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr. (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, July 1992), 65.

7. Air Corps Tactical School Lecture Text, "Air Force Objectives," ACTS Course "Air Force," 1934–35, 204, Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, Ala., File No. 248.101-1.

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11. Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1963), 172.

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13. Ibid., 69.

14. Schelling, 97.

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16. Ibid., 291.

17. Vicki. E. Baier, James G. March, and Harald Saetren, "Implementation and Ambiguity," in *Decisions and Organizations,* ed. James G. March (New York: Basil Blackwell Inc., 1988), 159.

18. Lt Col Pat Pentland, a School of Advanced Airpower Studies professor, presented these unpublished notes during lecture on 10 November 1993 at Maxwell AFB, Ala.

19. AFM 1-1, *Basic Aerospace Doctrine of the United States Air Force,* vol. 2, March 1992, 13.

20. "Principles of War Applied to Air Force Action." 9.

21. J. Richard Harrison and James G. March, "Decision-Making and Postdecision Surprises," in *Decisions and Organizations,* 245.

22. Julian Feldman and Herschel Kanter, *Organizational Decision-Making* (Santa Monica: System Development Corporation, 30 December 1963), Air University Library, Maxwell AFB, Ala., File No. M-40408-5, No. 1357, 13.

23. James G. March, "Introduction: A Chronicle of Speculations About Decision-Making in Organizations," in *Decisions and Organizations,* 4.

Chapter 4

The Czechoslovakian Crisis—A Case Study

The previous two chapters presented the conceptual background and theory for a coercive air strategy aimed at undermining an opponent's internal support for a particular policy decision. While this theoretical base forms an essential part of the entire proposal, it is difficult (if not impossible) to assess the "value" of this strategy solely on its theoretical merits. We need to make an assessment of the strategy's practical "value" to define the conditions that suggest its future applications.

The Czechoslovakian crisis that gripped Europe in the summer and fall of 1938 highlights many of the same situational characteristics we see today and might expect to see tomorrow. Germany's status as a predominately land-based regional power, guided by a dominant leader with expansionist desires, has many parallels with the existing situations in Korea, Iraq, and other parts of the world. In addition, Britain's position as a world power with global interests and a fiscally constrained forward military presence approximates our own current situation.

The use of this historical episode addresses three specific questions in regard to our search to define the proposed strategy's operative conditions. First, what were the nature and cohesiveness of the German decision-making process? Second, were the British aware of this information? Finally, how could the proposed strategy have helped the British counter the German strategy of bluff and intimidation?

We begin our study by examining the nature and cohesion of the German decision process. This effort encapsulates the "know your enemy" theme that runs through this entire project. As we explore this situation with regard to a decision consensus, we find that five potentially powerful groups existed in Germany during this critical period:

- Hitler and the National Socialist (Nazi) party
- the military
- big business and finance
- governmental bureaucracy
- civil populace.[1]

While all the groups were important, Hitler and the army came to dominate internal foreign policy concerns. As a result, we will focus on how the army's conservative organizational views eventually clashed with Hitler's more radical expansionist desires.

Hitler enjoyed unexpected diplomatic success during his rise to power in the 1930s. He denounced the military clauses in the Versailles Treaty (1935), reoccupied the Rhineland (1936), and consumed Austria (1938) as the rest of Europe simply stood by and watched. While these events unsettled the international community, they had even a greater impact on the domestic political power balance. "In each one of these cases Hitler threw the warnings of the Army command to the wind" which "increased his self-confidence enormously and undermined the authority of all those who sought to oppose him with their 'old fashioned' ideas."[2] Emboldened, not appeased, by these "easy" diplomatic victories, Hitler turned his attention to another rich prize—Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland.

At a time when Hitler's influence and power were rising, the army's political fortunes were setting. The army, as the primary defender of the continental German empire since Frederick the Great, historically exerted tremendous influence over state policy. However, in the zero-sum game of political influence, Hitler's seemingly clairvoyant ability to predict the future directly challenged the army's traditional preeminence. Three politically significant events, all occurring in early 1938, rocked the service. In rapid succession, the army experienced the forced resignation of Field Marshal Werner von Blomberg, the minister for war, suffered through the dismissal of Col Gen Werner von Fritsch, the commander in chief of the army; and witnessed Hitler's assumption of personal command of the armed forces.[3] Together, these events underscored a disturbing decline in the army's organizational influence.

We can trace this decline back to the "Hossbach" conference in November 1937. It was here that "Hitler revealed for the first time in the presence of the Foreign Minister, the War Minister and the Commanders-in-Chief of the three Services his resolve to settle the question of German 'living space' by force."[4] Objections were immediately raised and intensified over the next several months. General von Rundstedt described a spring 1938 meeting at which *all* the major commanders sought to dissuade Hitler from his aggressive course of action.[5] As summer approached, it became clear that "the leading figures in the *Generalitat* saw things differently [from Hitler] on almost every point. None of them shared his racial fantasies or dreams of wholesale eastern expansion."[6]

These differences came to a head when Hitler's 30 May 1938 directive officially and unequivocally stated, *"It is my unalterable decision to smash Czechoslovakia by military action in the near future."*[7] Senior army leaders vehemently opposed this decision. As a group, the generals predicted an invasion of Czechoslovakia would pit an ill-prepared Germany against the major European powers in an unwinable two-front war. In spite of Hitler's previous diplomatic triumphs, they collectively felt military action against an alliance protected Czechoslovakia was tantamount to committing national suicide. The army chief of staff later stated,

> When it became clear to responsible military circles that Hitler was determined to bring about military intervention on the issue of Sudeten Germans, patriots in the

German army decided to prevent what they felt was inevitable catastrophe to Germany by removing Hitler.[8]

Obviously a serious difference of expectations had developed. Where Hitler professed complete military and political success, the generals saw complete failure. Hitler believed the Western European powers would not intervene militarily. The army was not convinced. Organizationally, they would be the first to suffer the consequences from any diplomatic miscalculation. Army leaders knew they did not have the *capability* to fight against the combined might of the Czech, French, British, and Russian armies. The German western frontier was inadequately manned as troops were moved east in anticipation of the upcoming Czech invasion. Both Gen Alfred Jodl, at his trial at Nuremberg, and Gen Wilhelm Adam, in his memoirs, describe the ability of the Germans to withstand a French invasion as "sheer lunacy."[9]

To the army, Hitler's decision represented a foolhardy gamble. Organizational survival, couched in terms of national survival, was at stake. Consequently, several groups, with the army leadership at the center, came together to form a conspiracy to prevent the gamble from occurring.

> Soldiers opposed war in 1938 not merely because it would be disastrous for Germany but because, in facing and fighting against this danger, they seemed to have an opportunity of overthrowing a criminal regime and returning to the concepts of national and international decency which were in closer accord with genuine military and aristocratic traditions.[10]

Clearly, Hitler and the army held widely disparate expectations concerning the consequences of the decision to use military force to resolve the Czech crisis. Each was strongly committed to their own particular projections. Recalling the internal support categories introduced earlier, we see that a split support condition most closely describes Germany's internal consensus in the summer and fall of 1938 (fig. 9). We can also chart how the pattern of internal dissension and resolve evolved from the Hossbach conference (1) to the Munich summit (2) (fig. 10). Although the actual crisis only lasted for five months, a potential coercive window of opportunity
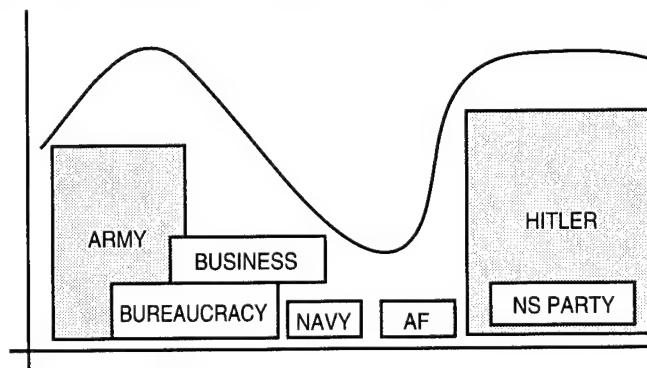

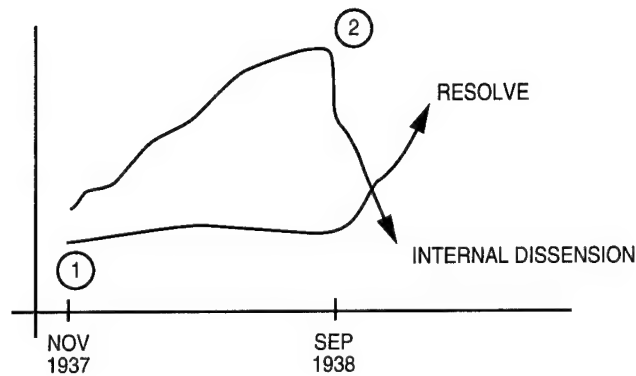**Figure 9. German Internal Consensus**

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Figure 10. German Internal Dissension-Resolve Estimate

rapidly opened until slammed shut by Neville Chamberlain's diplomatic mission to Munich in late September.

> Thus at the moment when the British Cabinet and the French were about to call Hitler's bluff, Chamberlain sold the pass. If Britain had stayed firm, Hitler would either have been defeated in the field or the German generals would have overthrown him. Hitler had staked his reputation on occupying Czechoslovakia by 1 October, and failure would have left him vulnerable.[11]

While an analysis of the German internal situation is an interesting academic discussion some 56 years *after* the fact, the key issue for our purposes hinges on whether the British were aware of both Hitler's action decision and the internal resistance to it. The number and variety of German opposition attempts to secure British support strongly suggests that the key British officials had a clear picture of both conditions. Hans Rothfels suggests both the British foreign secretary and prime minister "were completely conversant with the attitude and plans of the German opposition in the summer and autumn of 1938."[12] They simply discounted the fact that "a conspiracy had been arranged by Field Marshal von Witzlenben with the support of some of the leading generals to have Hitler arrested and an announcement made to the German people that Hitler was trying to lead them into war."[13] In any case, "At the peak of the international crisis there were clear signs of a severe crisis of confidence in [Hitler's] regime."[14]

What could the British have done differently to end the crisis on more favorable terms? The split support condition in Germany offered an ideal coercive situation for the British. According to the wishes of the opposition, they could have staged a small military demonstration that would have not only surprised Hitler and his few supporters, but strengthened the opposition by confirming their predictions that further aggressive action would lead Germany into another world war. The opposition, in fact, "Counted on a reverse which would either force the dictator to give in and so lose face, or else, if he continued on the road to catastrophe, make it possible to arraign him on a charge of war-mongering."[15] "The general

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trend of public opinion in Germany was very favorable to [removing Hitler to avoid war] as the idea of war filled everyone with horror, and the feeling about Hitler's genius in the political and diplomatic field only emerged after the Munich agreement.[16]

Although the state of the British land and air arms precluded a large-scale response, a naval demonstration was quite possible given that most Germans, including Hitler, respected British sea power.[17] One German diplomat describes an attempt to have the British conduct naval maneuvers in the North Sea as a warning of British determination.[18] This may have been all that was needed for the opposition to depose Hitler.

We can use this crisis as a guide for future action. We dominate the air today in much the same way as the British dominated the sea in 1938. Unfortunately, because they failed to know their adversary and themselves, they missed an opportunity to apply sea power selectively—and successfully—in a compellent situation. Their counterstrategy, relying on a unitary, rational actor assumption, eliminated any chance to take advantage of the uncertainty and conflicting organizational pressures that made Hitlers "split" government particularly vulnerable to a coercive effort. Under similar circumstances, we should consider the selective use of naval or land-based air power as a demonstration to compel a change in an opponent's policy decision.

Notes

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10. Rothfels, 79.

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Chapter 5

Conclusion

This paper has discussed strategy—coercive air strategy. Although other definitions exist, strategy is a decision *process* that links ways and means to a desired end. Many modern air strategists tend to concentrate solely on the ways and means side of the strategy equation. However, we have used Sun Tzu's *know your enemy and yourself* axiom, and his *attack an opponent's strategy* corollary, to propose an approach that seeks to influence the decision process aspect of strategy.

From the outset, we contended that there is no single, universally applicable approach that will always yield success. With this proposition in mind, we introduced a possible alternative strategy that seeks to undermine an opponent's confidence in a prior decision to produce a bureaucratic shift. We expect to accomplish this aim by exploiting how uncertainty and organizational pressures influence decision making in a consensus. Our effort focused on identifying the conditions that are conducive to the successful application of the proposed air strategy.

We began our study by examining the methodology of government decision making. Using a framework developed that blends Graham Allison's three decision models into one interrelated structure, we concluded that

- the value maximizing, rational actor model fails to consider fully the often subjective and possibly irrational organizational and political factors that lie at the heart of most complex issues,
- policy decisions often result from a political consensus where decision makers share power by bargaining for support in an uncertain environment,
- organizational leaders, biased by their "institutional" views and expectations, often play a central role in this consensus process.

Consequently, we focused on how organizational leaders form a unique subset of the classic leadership target set. In addition, we explored how their divergent expectations may make them particularly vulnerable to an "indirect" coercive air effort.

Building on this foundation, we sought to develop a coercive air strategy to affect this governmental decision framework. We concluded that a strategy's mechanism, that aspect that allows it to work, contains a key assumption concerning how governments make decisions. As a result, we noted that when a strategist fits a particular strategy to a particular situation, that person is actually making a choice between competing mechanisms. Where most theories assume the opposing government operates as a unitary rational

actor, our strategy sees a complex combination of competing organizations within a political consensus.

Our proposal uses the speed and flexibility of air power to exploit the uncertainty and organizational pressures inherent in this consensus decision environment during what we call "windows of coercive opportunity." These windows stem from an interaction between an opponent's internal dissension and the resolve shown for a particular policy. What we hope to achieve within this window is a shift in the consensus significant enough to produce a policy change. We can tailor our response either to surprise policy advocates or to support policy opponents. In either case, we expect to achieve a decrease in the relative power of those supporting the policy by showing their inability to predict future consequences accurately. In other words, we hope to induce a feeling of distrust and internal failure. To achieve this goal, we must know our enemy.

The British clearly failed to *know* their German opponent in the Czechoslovakian crisis that preceded World War II. Hitler and the army held widely disparate views of the consequences of the decision to solve the crisis by military force. Hitler expected total political and military success, while the military foresaw complete organizational failure. A definite schism developed and British leaders were acutely aware of it. A naval exercise to demonstrate British resolve may have provided the missing ingredient the German opposition elements needed to oust Hitler. Unfortunately, the Munich Agreement that promised "peace in our time" closed the window of coercive opportunity and put Europe on track for the Second World War.

Considering the previous discussion, the following are the key conditions that might suggest the use of the proposed air strategy:

• Our opponent makes decisions where organizations influence the consensus.

• A split within the consensus exists concerning the wisdom or consequences of a particular action.

• The competing organizational expectations offer the opportunity to use (or threaten to use) air power against vulnerable targets.

• A suitable coercive window of opportunity exists.

• We have the political will to use the military instrument (particularly air power).

• Our desired outcome is a policy change, not a change in government.

• A rapid response is required.

The above list is only an initial attempt to define many of the likely conditions that would suggest the use of this particular approach. Additional research is necessary to refine these conditions further. For example, how well does the proposed strategy apply to other historical situations or likely future scenarios? How well does this approach support a deterrent situation, rather than a compellent one? More research should also enhance the coercive window of opportunity concept.

In conclusion, we must reemphasize our belief that proper strategy selection is highly situation dependent. We must resist the tendency to follow "proven" strategies as universally applicable, and concentrate on the more difficult task of matching the proper mechanism to the situation. The proposed approach is only one of many possible alternatives, not *the* alternative. In today's highly competitive world, we need a wide range of strategy options to employ the air power instrument successfully.

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